

MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP

Success Stories from the Field

Inventory Technology Inc.

Illinois Manufacturing Extension Center

Quality System Key to Retaining Business for Inventory Technology Inc.

Client Profile:

Inventory Technology Inc. (ITI), is a manufacturer and assembler of components for Caterpillar, from oil coolers and water pumps, to complex injection pump assemblies. Located in Mossville, Illinois, the company employs 280 people.

Situation:

ITI delivers hundreds of components to Caterpillar's Mossville Engine Center every 30 minutes. The components are unloaded and taken directly to the assembly line, a fluid process that exemplifies the concept of 'Just In Time' (JIT). "Obviously it is imperative that we be very flexible to meet Caterpillar's delivery requirements," said Marty McGann, Operations Manager for ITI. If you wish to retain the business, you must excel every day, no exceptions."

As ITI's share of the sequencing, kitting, and subassembly business increased, the company grew to 450 employees. At the same time, Caterpillar raised its expectations for quality, cost, and delivery. McGann was assigned to drive the development of a Quality Management System that would meet the requirements of the ISO 9001:2000 standard and facilitate continual improvement in process and quality. "We had grown so quickly simply trying to keep up with the increase in demand, we felt that we needed a managerial tool to provide more robust controls on quality," says McGann. The ITI management team brought in members of the Quality Team from the Illinois Manufacturing Extension Center (IMEC), a NIST MEP network affiliate, to help guide them through the process.

Solution:

IMEC's Gretchen Clifton conducted ISO training for the entire operation, performed process mapping and root cause analysis/corrective action training, and worked closely with the ITI management team to oversee the implementation. The IMEC team provided a baseline Quality Manual and guided ITI through the development of the manual to tailor it to the company's operation. "They knew the essentials and helped formulate our quality procedures," said McGann. Once the documented systems were in place, IMEC mentored ITI's internal auditors to watch ITI receive, build, ship, and verify that they were operating in accordance with the new procedures.

ITI passed its certification audit, and McGann is already seeing the results. "I am confident that we are producing a much better product today," he said. "By looking at processes more thoroughly, we're able to get to the root cause of a problem and not just fix it for the moment but prevent it from occurring again." Further, McGann reported the registration is paying dividends with its key customer. ITI has been asked to bid additional projects, and new orders have been received.

Results:

www.mep.nist.gov



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- * Achieved ISO 9001:2000 certification.
- * Improved product and processes.
- * Increased customer satisfaction.
- * Decreased product defects by 15 percent.

Testimonial:

"At times I wonder how we would have ever gotten this project off the ground without IMEC. We had no feel of where to begin."

Marty McGann, Operations Manager